



EPA New England joins the New England states and their local communities in a Clean Beach initiative.

What is EPA's Beach Initiative?

The goal of EPA's Beach Initiative is to protect public health by reducing beach closures in New England.

Why do we need to reduce pollution at New England's Beaches?

New England freshwater and coastal beaches were closed or posted more than 2,400 days during the summer of 2001, over 1,000 days in 2002, and over 1,900 days in 2003. Beaches must be closed, or advisories posted, when bacteria levels, which indicate the potential presence of fecal contamination, exceed acceptable levels. Polluted runoff and untreated sewage released into the water can contain bacteria, viruses and protozoans, which can cause illnesses such as gastroenteritis or hepatitis.

How will EPA and the states accomplish this goal?

- Provide federal money for monitoring, assessment and public notification at coastal beaches;
- Control sources of fecal contamination from storm water and non-point pollution sources;
- Establish "Flagship Beaches" in each of the five coastal New England states;
- Promote high quality monitoring and assessment methods and new technologies;
- Promote information sharing among beach managers;
- Involve the public and communities in education, monitoring and advocacy.

What has the Beach Initiative accomplished so far:

- EPA awarded over \$2.6 million to develop beach monitoring, assessment and public notification programs.
- EPA and state officials are providing assistance to communities experiencing repeated beach closures.
- All 1300 coastal New England states have: mapped beaches, identified pollution sources, and developed monitoring plans. Beaches with greater risks and higher use are targeted for more frequent monitoring. The states have also established regional or state-wide labs with improved quality assurance, and conducted training for local health officials on methods for monitoring, pollution assessment and public notification.
- ME, MA, NH and RI are conducting special studies to track down pollution sources near beaches using new molecular technologies.
- Thousand of beach-goers have been notified of water quality conditions through on-site flagging or web sites and new improved web sites (in Maine and New Hampshire) will be established in 2004.

What's Happening at the Flagship Beaches?

"Flagship Beaches" are high-use beaches selected by each state for targeted pollution assessments, enhanced monitoring and pollution notification. Beach managers at other beaches will be able to learn from these "Flagship Beaches" and implement tools and ideas that would work at their own beach. Look for Flagship Beach flags flying at the following beaches this summer:

Flagship Beaches 2004		Last Season's Accomplishments at Flagship beaches
CT	- Rocky Neck State Park, East Lyme - Ocean Beach Park, New London	Ongoing upgrades to New London's sewer system is improving water quality at Ocean Beach.
ME	-Ferry Beach State Park, Saco -Wells Beach	State officials found potential human and non-human pollution sources to the rapidly urbanizing Wells Beach coastal watershed.
MA	-Salem City Beaches -Wollaston Beach, Quincy -Provincetown Beach	Local communities, with state and federal funding, have invested in sewer upgrades to reduce illicit connections and other pollution sources.
NH	- Hampton Beach State Park	NH DES completed a report on pollution threats to Hampton and North Hampton beaches and identified ways to keep high water quality.
RI	- Goddard Memorial State Park, Warwick - Warren Town Beach - King Park Swim Area, Newport	A Watershed Management Plan for Greenwich Bay is being developed to help protect water quality at Goddard beach. In Warren, a leaking sewer line was fixed and in New port, discharges from a combined sewer overflow have been reduced.

What can I do to help?

The public is strongly urged to get involved in their local beach program. Things you can do to help are to:

- Properly maintain your septic system, pick-up after your dog, do not feed waterfowl
- participate in the development and implementation of your community's storm water management program (<http://www.epa.gov/NE/npdes/stormwater/index.html>)
- learn about water quality at your beach and contact the local health department to ensure water monitoring is being conducted;
- volunteer to monitor the water at your beach at (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer/>)

For Beach Water Quality Information:

EPA New England: www.epa.gov/ne/eco/beaches

CT: dep.state.ct.us/updates/beach/wtrqual.asp

MA: www.mass.gov/dph/beha/tox/reports/beach/beaches.htm

RI: www.health.state.ri.us/environment/beaches/index.html

EPA National: www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches

ME: www.mainehealthybeaches.org

NH: www.des.state.nh.us/beaches

VT: www.healthyvermontors.info/cph/officers/recwater.shtml